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ABSTRACT

Patterns that emerged from reviewing eight syllabi for core courses on institutional research and planning (IRP) in higher education are discussed, and a sample syllabus is presented. Course titles used in the IRP core graduate-level courses are identified, along with the course purpose and objectives, when specified. It is noted that most of the syllabi do not explicitly state the course purpose, and course objectives were listed in only three syllabi. No syllabus listed required prerequisites, but some recommended courses or subject areas. Most syllabi listed class participation and formal examinations as grade requirements for the course. Another requirement in almost all courses was a major project that composed 20% or more of the final grade. The major project is often a literature review, field project, institutional research report, planning proposal, or similar exercise. Ten required textbooks in IRP core courses are listed, along with references. Course topics are indicated for the courses with the following titles: institutional research and planning, institutional research, institutional research for strategic planning, planning in higher education, theory and practice of educational planning, and institutional assessment in higher education. A syllabus for an institutional research and planning seminar is included. A list of members of the course syllabi network is included. (SW)

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Clearinghouse for Course Syllabi in Higher Education

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND PLANNING

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INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND PLANNING

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Review of Institutional Research and Planning Syllabi

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Clearinghouse for Course Syllabi in Higher Education

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for the ASHE Clearinghouse for Course Syllabi in Higher Education

Introduction

Institutional research has been defined as "research conducted within an institution of higher education in order to provide information which supports institutional planning, policy formulation, and decision making" (Saupe, 1981, p. 1). Analytical skills, familiarity with the institutional planning process, and an understanding of the role of information in decision making are the basic requirements for effective institutional research.

Given these requirements, the range of knowledge required for institutional research and planning (IRP) cannot be taught in a single IRP course. Instead, IRP topics such as sampling techniques, costing studies, and the impact of college are most effectively taught in research methodology, budgeting, and student personnel courses. The institutional research and planning coursework establishes the linkage between these topics and introduces the student to the relatively few topics that are not taught in other courses (e.g., information theory) or which are given only slight attention (e.g., decision support systems, environmental scanning and analysis, planning models). In summary, institutional research and planning is taught across the curriculum, with the IRP coursework pulling together related concepts and instructing the student in topics not taught elsewhere.

The Emergence of Planning in IRP Courses

New problems and challenging imperatives are generating a revolution in college and university planning. Many institutions are discovering that they must increase their planning efforts if they are to control their own destiny (Keller, 1983). This attentiveness to planning is having a dramatic impact on institutional research and planning offices. Increasingly, IRP offices are expected to provide a variety of planning information as well as arrange the process of planning. Institutional planning has emerged from informality to become a line function in many institutions (Norris and Mims, 1984).

This increased emphasis on planning has "trickled down" into the higher education curriculum, especially institutional research. Planning is a dominant theme in course titles and is a major course topic in most of the syllabi examined in this review. As the syllabi make clear, this instructional area is no longer just institutional research, increasingly it is best described as institutional research and planning.

The Syllabi

Eight syllabi from institutional research and planning core courses are examined in this review. These syllabi were collected in conjunction with an ongoing research effort by the author to develop a descriptive profile of the IRP curriculum. The preliminary results from this research indicate that

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Robert Cope (University of Washington) and James Rusk (University of Arizona) for comments on drafts of this essay. Appreciation is expressed to Frank Plucker (University of Arizona) for his assistance in collecting the syllabi, and, of course, the cooperation of all faculty who submitted syllabi is gratefully acknowledged.

there are approximately 15 higher education programs (17 percent) which offer a core course in institutional research and planning. These programs are generally the larger, nationally known programs which have an enrollment sufficient to support an IRP core course.

This review includes only syllabi from IRP core courses--courses in which the primary focus is institutional research and planning. Not included are IRP related courses--courses in which some attention is devoted to IRP, but which have a different principal focus. For example, a course on accreditation emphasizes self-study and institutional evaluation, with one course objective being "students should be able to....describe the uses of institutional research and demonstrate familiarity with several important tools." This syllabus and others from related courses are not included in this review. A syllabus from an institutional assessment course is included because close examination of its topics showed a strong emphasis on planning and institutional research.

The sections which follow summarize the eight IRP core courses by examining course titles, purposes, objectives, prerequisites, requirements, texts, and course topics. One of the syllabi is included as an appendix. Copies of all syllabi are available from the author at the Center for the Study of Higher Education, University of Arizona.

Course Titles, Purposes, and Objectives

The course titles used in institutional research and planning core courses are:

- Institutional Research and Planning (2 courses)
- Institutional Research in Higher Education
- Institutional Research
- Institutional Research for Strategic Planning
- Planning in Higher Education
- Theory and Practice of Educational Planning
- Institutional Assessment in Higher Education

Most syllabi do not explicitly state the purpose of course. One which does indicates that "The purpose of the course is to provide the student with an understanding of the institutional research and planning functions in a complex organizational setting." Another syllabus lists its purpose as part of the course description: "This course offers instruction in the collection and analysis of data that inform management and planning decisions and provide direction for program development in schools and colleges." Finally, a third syllabus in a planning course offers this description: "The course focuses on the theory and practice of planning as a process applied to educational institutions and programs. The aim of the course is to familiarize educational administrators and planners with designs, conceptual tools and techniques useful in the development, administration and execution of educational plans."

Surprisingly, course objectives are listed in only three syllabi. This was unexpected because it would seem that course objectives are a requirement for any syllabus. If it is any consolation, this is typical of syllabi used in other disciplines as well (Rubin, 1985; Rubin offers a list of requirements for a good syllabus, a list that most faculty would find useful).

The syllabus in the appendix offers one list of course objectives. Another syllabus lists seven objectives which place primary emphasis on understanding and using data. Some of the objectives for this course are:

--Development of critical and rational thinking in relation to data and their interpretation.
--Awareness of the principal types of analyses used in higher education.
--Knowledge of the major local, state, regional, national, and international data sources.

--Familiarity with problems of collecting, organizing, evaluating, analyzing, and interpreting data.

Finally, the following three goals are from a third syllabus:

1. Understanding the role of institutional research in higher education
2. studying the techniques of analysis used in institutional research, and
3. actual experience in securing raw data from campus sources and developing reports that could be used by those who make the decisions.

Course Prerequisites, Requirements, and Texts

No syllabus lists required prerequisties, but some recommend courses or subject areas with which the student should be familiar. Knowledge of, or familiarity with, statistic techniques is a recommended prerequisite in two syllabi. One of these two also recommends the student have completed, or take concurrently, core courses in Finance and Organization and Governance, as well as be familiar with research design methods and issues. One syllabus explicitly notes the lack of prerequisites: "This course...presupposes no previous knowledge of institutional research. A background in statistics is not necessary."

Most syllabi list class participation and formal examinations as grade requirements for the course. Another requirement in almost all courses is a major project which composes 20 percent or more of the final grade. This major project is usually a literature review, field project, institutional research report, planning proposal, or similar exercise. In one course students are required to report weekly on assigned readings or data collection instruments.

Required textbooks in IRP core courses include:

1. Jedamus, Paul, Marvin W. Peterson, and Associates. Improving Academic Management: A Handbook of Planning and Institutional Research. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980. (2 courses)
2. Keller, George. Academic Strategy: The Management Revolution in American Higher Education. Baltimore: John Hopkins Univ Press, 1983. (2 courses)
3. Dressel, Paul L. and Associates. Institutional Research in the University: A Handbook. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1971.
4. Firnberg, James W. and William P. Lasher (eds.). The Politics and Pragmatics of Institutional Research. New Directions for Institutional Research, No. 38. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1983.
5. Hopkins, David S. P. and William F. Massy. Planning Models for Colleges and Universities. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1981.
6. Lewis, James, Jr. Long-Range and Short-Range Planning for Educational Administrators. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1983. (This text focuses on K-12; it is included in a comprehensive educational planning course.)
7. MacRae, Duncan, Jr. and James A. Wilde, Policy Analysis for Public Decisions. North Scituate, Mass: Duxbury Press, 1979.

The assessment course syllabus lists a number of required texts, including:

8. Craven, Eugene (ed.). Academic Program Evaluation New Directions for Institutional Research, No. 27. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980.
9. Miller, Richard I. The Assessment of College Performance. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979.
10. Scott, Robert A. (ed.). Determining the Effectiveness of Campus Services. New Directions in Institutional Research, No. 41. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1984.

In addition to these required texts, most courses use articles from the New Directions for Institutional Research series and reports published by the institution's IRP office. A few courses also use materials from the Association for Institutional Research, especially the AIR Forum Proceedings and the

Professional File series. Overall, IRP courses tend to use photocopied materials from these sources rather than books or monographs. One syllabus specifically states that "because no suitable text is available, the course relies extensively on library resources, as well as materials distributed in xerox form."

Course Topics

Course topics are included in seven of the eight syllabi. Because course topics provide the most concise description of course content, a complete list of course topics is included as Table 1 on the following page.

Course topics in three of the syllabi suggest that these three courses each emphasize a particular aspect of IRP. First, the course topics in the institutional assessment course emphasize the evaluation and assessment function of IRP (e.g., evaluating faculty, assessing the external environment). Second, topics in another course suggest an extraordinary emphasis on data collection and analysis. Seven of the fifteen course topics contain the word data (e.g., comparative institutional data, curricular data) and several others are data-related topics (e.g., management information systems). Finally, one of the planning courses places a strong emphasis on strategic and operational planning, these two topics occupying about half of all class sessions.

One way to summarize the course topics is to divide the list into two groups, macro topics and micro topics. Macro topics are more general and are applicable to a variety of IR functions. Examples include strategic planning, decision support systems, master planning, environmental scanning and analysis, and management information systems. The micro topics are more specific and generally are more applied than the macro topics. Examples of these topics include studies of students and enrollments, faculty studies, facility utilization studies, and cost studies.

References

Keller, George. Academic Strategy: The Management Revolution in American Higher Education. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983.

Norris, Donald M., and R. Sue Mims. "A New Maturity of Institutional Planning and Information Management." Journal of Higher Education, 55 (November/December 1984), 700-718.

Rubin, Sharon. "Professors, Students, and the Syllabus." Chronicle of Higher Education, August 7, 1985, 56.

Saupe, Joe L. The Functions of Institutional Research. Tallahassee, Florida: Association for Institutional Research, 1981.

Table 1
Course Titles and Topics in
Eight Institutional Research and Planning Core Courses

I. Course title: Institutional Research and Planning
see appendix

II. Course title: Institutional Research and Planning
1. Introduction to institutional research
2. Government documents, search techniques and project design
3. Application of institutional research to finances
4. State support of higher education
5. Cost studies
6. Comparative institutional data
7. Measurement and interpretation of student data
8. Enrollment projections and analytical reports of student data
9. Measurements of faculty data
10. Problems with and reports of faculty data
11. Measurements of facilities
12. Problems with and reports of facilities data
13. Curricular data
14. Management information systems
15. Strategic planning

III. Course title: Institutional Research
1. Major problems in higher education (enrollment, finance, etc.)
2. Nature of institutional research in self-study
3. Planning and executing institutional research reports
4. Collecting and utilizing basic data
5. Studying environment
6. Studying teaching and learning
7. Evaluating outcomes of instruction
8. Developing and using information systems
9. Allocating and utilizing resources
10. Long-range planning
11. Conducting self-study
12. Wider research (externally originated studies)
13. Toward the future

IV. Course title: Institutional Research in Higher Education
No topics listed

V. Course title: Institutional Research for Strategic Planning
1. Areas of insitutional research/information systems
2. Planning/decision making
3. Student outcomes
4. Enrollment management
5. Costing/budget cycle
6. Faculty activity analysis
7. New technology/IR issues
8. Audience/interinstitutional research
9. Student reports

VI. Course title: Planning in Higher Education

1. Planning and IR in the context of higher education administration
2. Planning, governance, management, leadership, and purpose of admin
3. Administrative performance and assessment
4. Institutionalization and diffusion
5. The environment for planning
6. Academic Strategy by Keller (2 classes)
7. The substance of planning (planning models, styles, and approaches)
8. Developing information systems
9. Decision models and their utilization
10. Statewide master planning
11. Formulating goals, objectives, and institutional mission statements
12. Academic program planning
13. Enrollment forecasting and planning
14. Budgetary planning
15. Evaluation and assessment

VII. Course title: Theory and Practice of Educational Planning

1. Types of planning (strategic, operational, and problem-solving)
2. Basic concepts of planning (definition, historical sketch, relationship with decision making, rational and incremental approaches, conceptual frameworks, relationship with policy analysis)
3. Policy analysis steps (define problem, criteria, alternatives, etc)
4. Strategic planning (guidance systems, goals, planning assumptions, forming and evaluating strategies, sketch planning, etc.)
5. Operational planning (short range objectives, performance standards, planning controls, planning policies and guidelines, etc.)
6. Planning offices (organization, staff preparation)
7. Evaluating planning

VIII. Course title: Institutional Assessment in Higher Education

1. Alternative conceptions of evaluation/assessment
2. Effectiveness and efficiency
3. Goals, outcomes, and objectives
4. Evaluating students and student environments
5. Evaluating faculty
6. Evaluating administrators and administrative services
7. Curriculum and program evaluation
8. Assessing the external environment
9. Federal and state information reporting requirements
10. Management information systems and planning
11. Modeling and quantitative analyses
12. Self-study and accreditation
13. Relationship of assessmt to policy developmt and institutnl change

---APPENDIX----

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND PLANNING

This seminar encompasses the ever-expanding arena of institutional research and planning in the college and university setting. The purpose of the course is to provide the student with an understanding of the institutional research and planning functions in a complex organizational setting. The course has the following objectives:

1. To examine the topical content, the research methods, the organizational and decision-making role and the knowledge utilization strategies of institutional research;

2. To analyze the institutional planning process, its varied dimensions and approaches, and its relationship to the governance process;

3. To review the rapidly changing information and decision support systems area that may be used in IR and Planning;

4. To examine the relationship of information technology, institutional research and institutional planning;

5. To develop skill in designing, critiquing, or administering an institution's organizational intelligence andn planning function.

The primary concern of the course is that the student develop an integrated knowledge of information and decision support systems, the institutional research and analysis functions, and planning strategies and approaches, and that they be able to relate them to institutional governance and leadership patterns to improve institutional academic management and performance.

No attempt will be made to develop technical proficiency in any single area. Students with intensive interest in the area as a career field are advised to discuss their program with the instructor. They should plan an intensive internship experience in the field and are advised to take related course sequences such as:

a) An advanced statistics and research methodology sequence.
b) Courses in systems analysis, information systems design, or simulation.
c) An advanced sequence on organization theory in psychology, sociology, or the business school.
d) Courses in political science, public administration, or economics are appropriate for state-level planning and analysis.

While there are no specific prerequisites, the seminar assumes the student has taken College Organization and Administration and Financial Management of Higher Education (may be taken concomitantly) or their equivalent. It also assumes a knowledge of bivariate and multivariate statistical techniques and a familiarity with basic research design methods and issues.

COURSE PROCEDURES,REQUIREMENTS, AND GRADING:

Course procedures vary: some lectures, guest presentations, field trips, readings and discussons, and problem solving or modeling exercises.

Students are expected to complete two written projects: 1) an individual or small group field project, and 2) an in-depth review of a focused area of IR and/or planning literature. Both will be shared in the seminar.

Grading is S-U and is based on class participation and project evaluation.

COURSE ACTIVITIES HAVE INCLUDED:

1. One or more field trips to IR and Planning offices at nearby community colleges, liberal arts colleges and public universities.

2. Outside guests on topics such as resource allocation, institutional and academic planning, information system design and simulation modeling, state impact on institutional planning, campus and capital planning.

3. Examples of other activities: 3-4 week computer simulation with a Resource Allocation Model, case studies of IR and planning efforts, etc.

FIELD PROJECT SUGGESTIONS:

1. Analyze and critique an institution's planning strategy, its management information system, or its institutional research office or process.

2. Design an IR and/or planning system for an institution.

3. Identify and critique different approaches to a particular IR or planning topic (e.g., goal setting, program review, forecasting, etc.).

4. Collect and critique IR or planning models or techniques currently being used or advocated.

5. Write a literature and research-based paper on an IR or planning topic for submission to a professional journal or conference program.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Each student selects a focused topic in IR and planning and prepares a literature review and brief annotated bibliography to share with other students.

BOOKS OR SUBSCRIPTIONS RECOMMENDED FOR PURCHASE

Hopkins, D. and Massy, W. Planning Models for Colleges and Universities. Stanford University Press, 1981.

Jedamus, P. and Peterson, M. Improving Academic Management: A Handbook for Planning and Institutional Research. Jossey-Bass, 1980.

New Directions for Institutional Research. Monograph Series. AIR and Jossey-Bass.

TENTATIVE CALENDAR

DATES	TOPICS
JANUARY 9	Introduction: Discussion of course requirements and topics; general overview.
JANUARY 16	Differing perspectives of IR. Differing concepts and models of the planning process.
	Relationship of IR and planning process to governance and decision support systems.

JANUARY 23-FEBRUARY 6
Typical Descriptive and Analytic Studies

JANUARY 23	Studies of students and enrollments.
JANUARY 30	Studies of faculty and academic programs.
FEBRUARY 6	Organizational and administrative studies.

FEBRUARY 13-FEBRUARY 27
The Information and Decision Support System.

FEBRUARY 13	Information Systems: concepts, developments, and issues.
FEBRUARY 20	Decision Support: strategies, applications and issues.
FEBRUARY 27	NO CLASS--SPRING BREAK

MARCH 6-APRIL 20
The Planning Function: Strategies and Analytic Studies.

MARCH 6	Strategic and master planning--organizational and policy issues.
MARCH 13	Environmental and futures analysis.
MARCH 20	Academic planning and resource allocation.
MARCH 27	Evaluation--Programmatic and Institutional. Strategies, criteria, and utilization issues.
APRIL 3	Campus and capital planning.
APRIL 10	External Groups in Planning.

APRIL 17 and 24
OVERVIEW

APRIL 17	Future Directions of IR and Planning
APRIL 24	Seminar Projects

RELATED RESOURCES FOR IR AND PLANNING

1. Higher Education Associations with a Particular Focus on IR and Planning and Related Journals.

Association of Governing Boards (AGB)
AGB Reports

Association of Institutional Research (AIR)
AIR Newsletter
New Directions in Institutional Research Series
Proceedings of Annual Forums
Professional File Series

Other Special Purpose Publications

College and University Systems Exchange (CAUSE)

Education Commission of the States (ECS)
Compact
Higher Education in the States
Legislative Review

National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO)
Management File Series
Special Purpose Publications

National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)
Numerous Publications

Society for College and University Planning (SCUP)
News from SCUP
Planning for Higher Education

Numerous Institutional Membership Associations and Professional Administrative Associations have some interest or special programs in the area.

II. Other Related Journals or Monograph Series.

EDUCOM Bulletin

Higher Eduation: An International Journal of Higher Education and Eucational Planning, Elsevier Scientific Publishing Co., Amsterdam, Netherlands.

ERIC/AAHE Research Report Series published by ERIC.

New Directions for Institutional Research Series published by Jossey-Bass with AIR sponsorship.

Research in Higher Education.

ASHE ERIC

Clearinghouse for Course Syllabi in Higher Education

A group of Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) members are forming a national higher education network for course syllabli. (See box.) The activity, sponsored by ASHE's Committee on Curriculum, Instruction and Learning, promises to be of great benefit to new and experienced teachers in higher education.

If you wish to participate, please send your latest course syllabi to the appropriate members of the network today. These individuals have committed their time and effort toward the following:

- syntheses reviewing course syllabi received with an evaluation of what is happening in each area (e.g., course titles, emphases, major works and resources in use, syllabi,models, trends, observations), along with a few exemplary syllabi to be made available via the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education by the end of 1985
- abstracts for inclusion in an essay on "Course Syllabi as Instructional Resources," to appear in the 1986 edition of ASHE's Instructional Resources Handbook for Higher Education
- updates of the essay/abstract in four years.

NETWORK MEMBERS

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To establish a viable clearinghouse, your help is needed. Please flood members of the network with your course syllabi and suggestions. Help establish a higher education clearinghouse for course syllabi.